

New Exhibit at King Caesar House

By Frederick Potter and Alice Hoyt

The gala opening of Duxbury Vignettes, the new exhibit in the King Caesar House museum wing, takes place next Sunday, June 15, at 3, for members; the first general admission's day will be Tuesday, June 17.

According to Webster, a vignette shades off gradually, to leave a single central impression. This, the new exhibit accomplishes with a fascinating series of separate presentations of Duxbury history.

In The Beginning traces Duxbury history back to the Stone Age 9,500 years ago with a watercolor backdrop at the Nook during the retreat of the ice from the Wisconsin glacier along our coast, showing in various colors the progression through the Indian age to the coming of the Pilgrims in 1620.

Duxbury is one of 15 spots in New England where Clovis-fluted spear points have been found, indicating that early hunters were here pursuing the mammoth, mastodon and caribou perhaps as long ago as 8,500 BC. One spear point found here is labeled Duxbury's oldest antique, left by a Clovis man or Paleo Indian. Artifacts of the Early and Late Archaic periods including a laboriously worked stone known as an Atlatl Weight made to fit a spear throwing stick was found in a Duxbury garden. Bows and arrows were not used until 3,000 years ago. In late Archaic soapstone cooking utensils were made, and by 300 AD a ceramic woodland culture had evolved producing pottery samples shown in the display. Historic culture began with the coming of the white man, who brought with him metals, guns and liquor, ending the pre-historic age with King Phillip's War in 1676.

The clock advances to show next the agreement, reproduced here but still existing, signed by Myles Standish, Constant Wadsworth and Samuel Nash for the Duxbury Pilgrims, and by Massasoit (his mark) for the Wampanoags agreeing to the sale of Indian land to the colonists.

The third of the cubicles focuses on early community life with the church as its center, first wholly united under Plymouth, then with subdivisions, and later sects. In the early days, church and government stood one and the same, sharing the same meeting house.

Hoyt on communications. Dick Wright, a tireless and conscientious worker, put together the entire Civil War assembly and the home industries portrayal. Alice Hoyt arranged the Sandwich Glass, and lent a hand in almost all the others. For the Ford Store in the balcony, Shirley Amory and Barbara Root toiled to great effect. Cherry Dalgren, with her artistic flair, helped everywhere, as did Penny Krieger.

A true community effort from start to finish, this as an exhibit not to be missed.

The following booth keys on early 18th century Duxbury of the Bradford family, exhibiting Gamaliel Bradford's actual certificate of the Order of the Cincinnati, the association of officers who had served under General Washington, French and Polish as well as American. The certificate, newly presented to the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society, bears Washington's signature. In the same booth is a Bradford-owned Hickling desk of the period.

In the adjacent Early Communications cubicle can be found fascinating drawings from *Harper's Weekly* showing the 1869 landing at Rouse's Point on Duxbury Beach of the Franco-American cable, first direct link from continent to continent. There are also scenes of the Old Colony Railroad in its heyday, before the advent of the automobile.

A fine exhibit of Civil War memorabilia from the Bumpus collection highlights Duxbury's active participation in the terrible conflict that split and nearly destroyed our nation. Further sections show lovely Sandwich Glass pieces, part of the collection received in past years from Mrs. Eben Ellison. The Home Industries section follows, complete with tools, shoe lasts and shoes, homemade quilts, the products of diligent Duxbury workers in their own houses, an important part of the local economy after the decline of shipbuilding.

A niche is reserved for the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society itself, depicting what the Society does, the books and pamphlets it produces, the historical reproductions, postcards and stationery it sells, and showing photographs of past presidents over the years.

A 19th century Bradford Booth brings the family history forward into the era of Duxbury prosperity of the age of ships, featuring a Bradford table and pictures from the Captain Gershom Bradford House on Tremont St. This is complemented by the adjoining Weston cubicle exhibiting costumes of the times and some distinctive Weston china used by King Caesar's family.

In the museum balcony, a unique exhibit features the Ford Store, once the nucleus of a town center on upper Tremont St., now forgotten after it was destroyed by fire and the mills opposite, abandoned. Painstaking research has recreated a store reputed to be the first department store in the country.

A show such as this with its many exhibits requires months of planning, then untold hours of hard work by a host of devoted society members under the overall direction of Alice Hoyt as general chairman and of Fred Potter as vice chairman. Expert help in design and decor were contributed by Sheridan Kettering and John Brown of Cadeaux. Assistance at every level was constantly available from Polly and Bill Wheelock, curators of the King Caesar House.

For the individual exhibits, Fred Potter researched primitive man in Duxbury in depth, then organized and constructed the entire presentation. Polly Nash worked without stint over the church and the community and the early Bradford section, as did Jim